

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Short-Form Video Platforms and Attentional Control: Evidence for Domain- and Platform-Specific Associations

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/94g193xc>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 48(0)

Authors

Ismail, Yaseen

Joiner, Richard

Publication Date

2026

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

Short-Form Video Platforms and Attentional Control: Evidence for Domain- and Platform-Specific Associations

Yaseen Ismail

University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom

Richard Joiner

University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom

Abstract

Short-form video (SFV) platforms provide immersive, algorithmically curated content streams that place distinctive demands on attention and cognitive control. We investigated whether associations between SFV use and ADHD-related symptoms depend on platform-specific affordances and whether these associations are domain-specific across inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity. In a cross-sectional survey of 193 emerging adults, we measured daily use of TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Reels, alongside dimensional ADHD symptom-scores and problematic social media use. TikTok use was positively associated with total ADHD symptomatology and inattention, but not with hyperactivity-impulsivity. Both relationships were mediated by problematic social media use. No significant associations were observed for other platforms. These findings suggest attentional consequences of SFV engagement are platform-specific and may depend on interface design and algorithmic structure. The selective association with inattention challenges task-switching or arousal-based accounts of media effects, and instead highlights the potential role of immersive, reward-driven attentional capture.